COOL SPRINGS FARMHOUSE

Noels sell home to Brentwood for Crockett Park

Private-public partnership saves Cool Springs House

By Lauren Lexa
Brentwood Journal Editor

A public and private partnership has enabled the city of Brentwood to obtain the Cool Springs Farm house and its outbuildings at no charge.

The historic structures was moved from Mallory Lane and its encroaching commercial development to become the cornerstone of Crockett Park's historic preservation area.

When longtime owners John and Karen Noel sold the homestead to Southeast Venture Co. in 1988, a deed restriction gave them final approval over what was done to the 1800s house. The unusual deed restriction was added as a matter of principle, Noel said.

"I do believe that somebody had to make a stand and commitment to the preservation of historic homes against the bulldozer," he said. "That's what we decided to do. To just take a stand on the principle of historical preservation.

"It was our commitment to ultimately what we believed that Williamson County could be and could become; it was just a vision," Noel said.

"I have watched, for numerous years, properties in the Williamson County area go the route of deterioration and neglect due to development because the land quite often became more valuable to development purposes than to history, and yet, in fact, what we really sell in Williamson County is its history.

"History is one of things that made Williamson County stand out from rest of the country towns, but we have allowed a lot of it to go to the destruction of the bulldozer," he said.

Initial plans for the property's development called for the home to be surrounded by specialty shops designed in a complimentary architectural style. However, those plans were never completed.

While the surrounding properties became developed into the CoolSprings Galleria and its outparcels of commercial development, the Cool Springs Farm property was listed for sale; ironically, the original name for the shopping mall was Park 65, but after meeting with developers, Noel's suggestion that the project take its name from the historical homestead was accepted.

Meanwhile, during the past year, a citizen's advisory committee began discussing plans for the development of a 150-acre park on Crockett Road. The property, owned by Monsanto Chemical, had been the homestead of the Crockett family, early Brentwood settlers who were noted riflesmiths. Until a few years ago, the two-story brick Crockett home still stood, and its demolition by Monsanto caught city officials and residents by surprise.

Still smarting from the loss, the park advisory committee began suggesting that the city build a replica of the Crockett home or a similar period home, or move an old home to the site to provide a sense of the city's past.

The search for a suitable structure began a year ago, spearheaded by Linda Lynch, community relations director for the city of Brentwood, City Commissioner Anne Dunn, Brentwood Historian Vance Little and Historic Commission member Diane Sylvis.

"When the city decided a historic home or a replica would be just perfect to set the tone for Crockett Park, we looked into the possibility of building a house, and it was going to be quite expensive so we felt like what we really would love to have is a historic home that had some meaning behind it, some feeling," said Lynch.

"There just aren't that many historic homes still remaining in Brentwood, and we found none that people were willing to part with.

"We went all over the county looking at old homes, and that's when Anne (Dunn) thought of the Cool Springs house and the possibility the Noels might let us move it to a better location, to put it in a farm-like setting like it was in its heyday," Lynch said.

In researching the history of the home, it was discovered that a Crockett descendent married into the Carothers family, who owned the house through the end of the 1800s.

However, nine months of negotiations and presentations were made before all parties signed off on the idea of moving the home to Crockett Park, according to Dunn.

"When we first asked Landmark Realty Service, they said they would not even consider the idea unless the city of Franklin agreed to it, since they did not want to offend Franklin or any of the historic groups there," Dunn said. "If there had been any condemnation by the city of Franklin, they would not agree to it."

But, Franklin officials had no opposition to the plan, and the Noels were then contacted for their approval.

"John and I are both very pleased that this transpired and I'm glad to know that Cool Springs Farm will be really enjoyed by the Williamson County community at large," Karen Noel said. "It just is a very exciting feeling because there was a tremendous amount of both of our energies put into that house; we raised our children there and we lived there 18 years.

"It is a thrill to have this kind of house showcased in the county it was built in for my children, my grandchildren and their grandchildren to be able to see," she said.

The home is one of the few Tennessee vernacular farmhouses that still stands. Originally a two-story log house without a dogtrot, it was built by Michael Long and bought in the 1830s by Robert Carothers, according to Little.

Prior to the Civil War, the house was remodeled, with four rooms and the clapboard siding added on.

"This is one of the largest log structures in Middle Tennessee; its nickname in the 1800s was 'The Mansion' because of the size of the log structure," Karen Noel said.

The outbuildings and barn on the site will also be moved to Crockett Park; the German-style barn may have been used at one time as a distillery or a tavern, Dunn said.

It will cost an estimated $42,000 to move the structures, which will be met through private donations, Dunn said. Landmark Realty Service has pledged a $10,000 contribution, and area builders and contractors have pledged their help in establishing the home at Crock Park.

"This project only came toget because we had a combination people working together for co mon goal and it worked out bea fully," Lynch said.

"When you have commerc interests, historic organizatio including the Tennessee Histori Commission, and two cities pull together toward a common go you can achieve quite a bit."

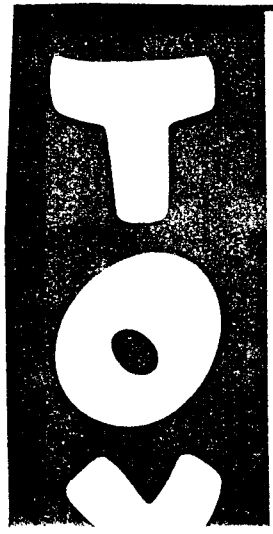
For Karen Noel, the plan epi mizes what ecology is all abo "Ecology is not just being aware our land and our atmosphere a our water, but also being aware the natural heritage we have a integrating all that together."

John Noel agreed. "When y transform an area, it becomes connected because of developm It's very difficult to develop prop ty without insulting the integrity the existing buildings as y attempt blend it with new devel ment.

"But, what we were able to here is carry on the feeling of historic place and take to a pl where it can really be used m effectively for that purpose," said.

WE DO IMPORTS
Clutches, Engines, Brakes, etc.
H & H AUTO
790-3849

8 Brands
ARTIST OIL PAINTS
In Stock
GRIFFIN
ART • SIGN • SCREEN PRINTING SUPPLIES
"Let Griffin be the heart of your art"
633 Middleton 254-3368



SAVE OVER $30 FOR BABY WITH COUPONS!

STORE COUPON EXPIRES 4/24/93
SAVE $2

STORE COUPON EXPIRES 4/24/93
CASHIER: Please ring at 6.99

Prominent landowners develop Cool Springs

HISTORIC BRENTWOOD

By Vance Little

The announcement of the removal of the Cool Springs House to Crockett Park has sparked a mild bit of interest in the age and history of the structure. While it might not have crossed your mind, if you continue to read this article, you will probably learn more about the house than you ever really wanted to know.

The origin of the Cool Springs House goes back to two of Williamson County's earliest families — the Barfields and the Carothers. It was mostly known as "the Carothers House."

In 1790, one Stephen Barfield is found in the North Carolina Tidewater area, a bachelor with six slaves. By 1808, he is found in Williamson County with a wife and a house full of kids. At that time, he probably built a small log house in which the family lived while the larger log house, what is now the Cool Springs House, was being built. When it was completed, the smaller house became the kitchen.

Stephen Barfield died early in 1818. He left a wife, Nancy, four sons, four daughters and 12 slaves. Before his death he had already deeded land to three of his sons. In his will he provided that the 12 slaves be sold and the proceeds divided among his daughters. He left his house (Cool Springs) to his wife and at her death to his youngest son Willie Blount Barfield. He also left Willie $200 "to help with his education."

Later that year, Sept. 30, 1818, to be precise, Stephen Barfield's daughter, Penelope married James Carothers (more about him later). He apparently moved into the Barfield household with his new bride because we do not find them living in a separate household in the 1820 Census.

Nancy Barfield died in 1829, at which time her son, Willie Blount Barfield, came into possession of Cool Springs. Four years later, he sold it to James Carothers, whom you will remember was living there with his wife Penelope Barfield Carothers, sister of Willie.

Back to James Carothers. His father, Robert Carothers, received a North Carolina grant to land (640 acres) in Brentwood. It appears to have been in the vicinity of Fountainhead subdivision. He was a prosperous and prominent member of the early Brentwood community. He spoke of James as his "third son."

James and Penelope Barfield Carothers prospered, acquired additional land, and died leaving numerous children. One of those children was Robert Blake Carothers, who ended up with the homeplace, Cool Springs.

Robert Blake Carothers is best known for his many wives — six of them. Count them. They were all from prominent local families. In 1846, he married Martha Jane Crockett. She died in 1847 at the age of 20 years. He married Priscilla Hodge in 1849. She expired in 1850. A year later, he married his third wife, Julia Ann Holt, who died in 1853. Her death notice says she was "stricken early in life with laryngitis." Can you believe that?

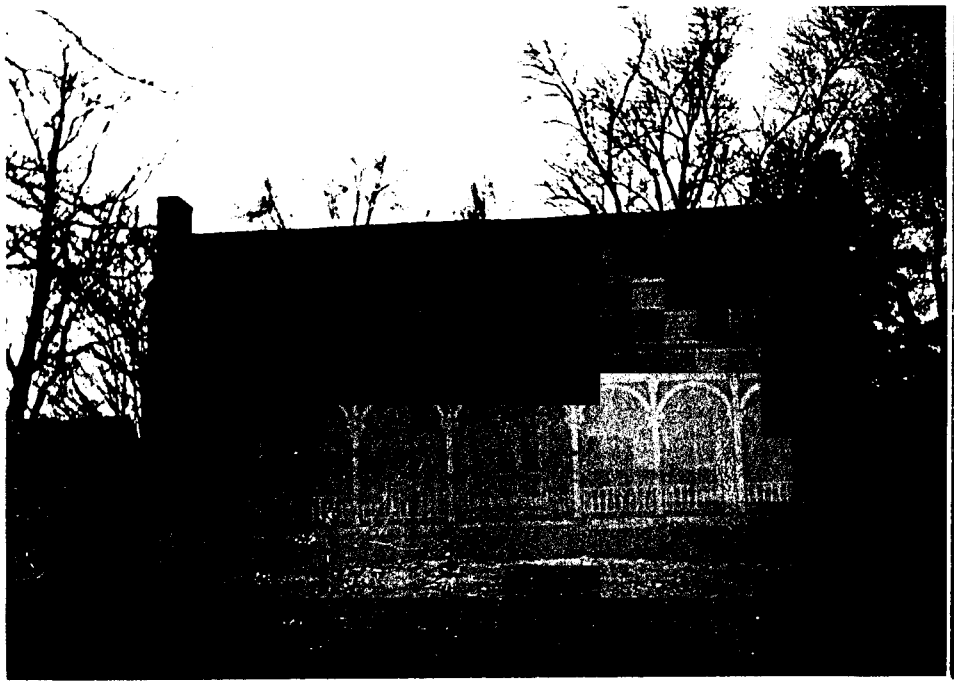
His fourth wife was Martha E. Fletcher who died in 1855. If our memory serves us correctly, Robert Blake Carothers was a physician. That says something, too.

He married Mary C. German in 1856. She must have been tough. That one lasted a while. They had several children. And then he married Mrs. Mary P. Richardson (nee McKay) in 1873.

In 1870 Robert Blake Carothers undertook to extensively remodel Cool Springs, maybe to attract another wife. Prior to that time, it had been a log house with two rooms up and two down. In the remodeling, he had the old chimney taken down and that area made into a hall. He added the two-story front portion on the right and a two-story addition in the rear ell. It was then that the house took on the appearance that we see today.

Dr. Carothers fell on hard times, no doubt wearied by having to adjust to so many new wives. He lost Cool Springs in 1878. It went through a succession of owners through the years until it was acquired by Karen and John Noel in 1970. They restored and remodeled the house and put it in the pristine condition that we find today. It was through their generosity and appreciation for the house that it became the property of the city of Brentwood.

Next week, we'll tell you about the barn at Cool Springs.



COOL SPRINGS
FARM
C. 1830 - 1856

House

Continued from Page 1

ing at old homes, and that's when Anne (Dunn) thought of the Cool Springs house and the possibility the Noels might let us move it to a better location, to put it in a farm-like setting like it was in its heyday," Lynch said.

In researching the history of the home, it was discovered that a Crockett descendent married into the Carothers family, who owned the house through the end of the 1800s.

However, nine months of negotiations and presentations were made before all parties signed off on the idea of moving the home to Crockett Park, according to Dunn.

"When we first asked Landmark Realty Service, they said they would not even consider the idea unless the city of Franklin agreed to it, since they did not want to offend Franklin or any of the historic groups there," Dunn said. "If there had been any condemnation by the city of Franklin, they would not agree to it."

But, Franklin officials had no opposition to the plan, and the Noels were then contacted for their approval.

"John and I are both very pleased that this transpired and I'm glad to know that Cool Springs Farm will be really enjoyed by the Williamson County community at large," Karen Noel said. "It just is a very exciting feeling because there was a tremendous amount of both of our energies put into that house; we raised our children there and we lived there 18 years.

"It is a thrill to have this kind of house showcased in the county it was built in for my children, my grandchildren and their grandchildren to be able to see," she said.

The home is one of the few Tennessee vernacular farmhouses that still stands. Originally a two-story log house without a dogtrot, it was built by Michael Long and bought in the 1830s by Robert Carothers, according to Little.

Prior to the Civil War, the house was remodeled, with four rooms and the clapboard siding added on.

"This is one of the largest log structures in Middle Tennessee; its nickname in the 1800s was 'The Mansion' because of the size of the log structure," Karen Noel said.

The outbuildings and barn on the site will also be moved to Crockett Park; the German-style barn may have been used at one time as a distillery or a tavern, Dunn said.

It will cost an estimated $42,000 to move the structures, which will be met through private donations, Dunn said. Landmark Realty Service has pledged a $10,000 contribution, and area builders and contractors have pledged their help in establishing the home at Crockett Park.

"This project only came together because we had a combination of people working together for common goal and it worked out beautifully," Lynch said.

"When you have commercial interests, historic organizations including the Tennessee Historical Commission, and two cities pulling together toward a common goal, you can achieve quite a bit."

For Karen Noel, the plan epitomizes what ecology is all about. "Ecology is not just being aware of our land and our atmosphere and our water, but also being aware of the natural heritage we have and integrating all that together."

John Noel agreed. "When you transform an area it becomes disconnected because of development. It's very difficult to develop property without insulting the integrity of the existing buildings as you attempt blend it with new development.

"But, what we were able to do here is carry on the feeling of this historic place and take to a place where it can really be used most effectively for the purpose," he said.

Light

Historic home, outbuildings will be moved to city park

Plan preserves Cool Springs farmhouse

By Lauren Lexa
Journal Editor

Currently standing on a stone foundation, the Cool Springs Farm house will weather the future with even stronger reinforcements — those reinforcements are principles.

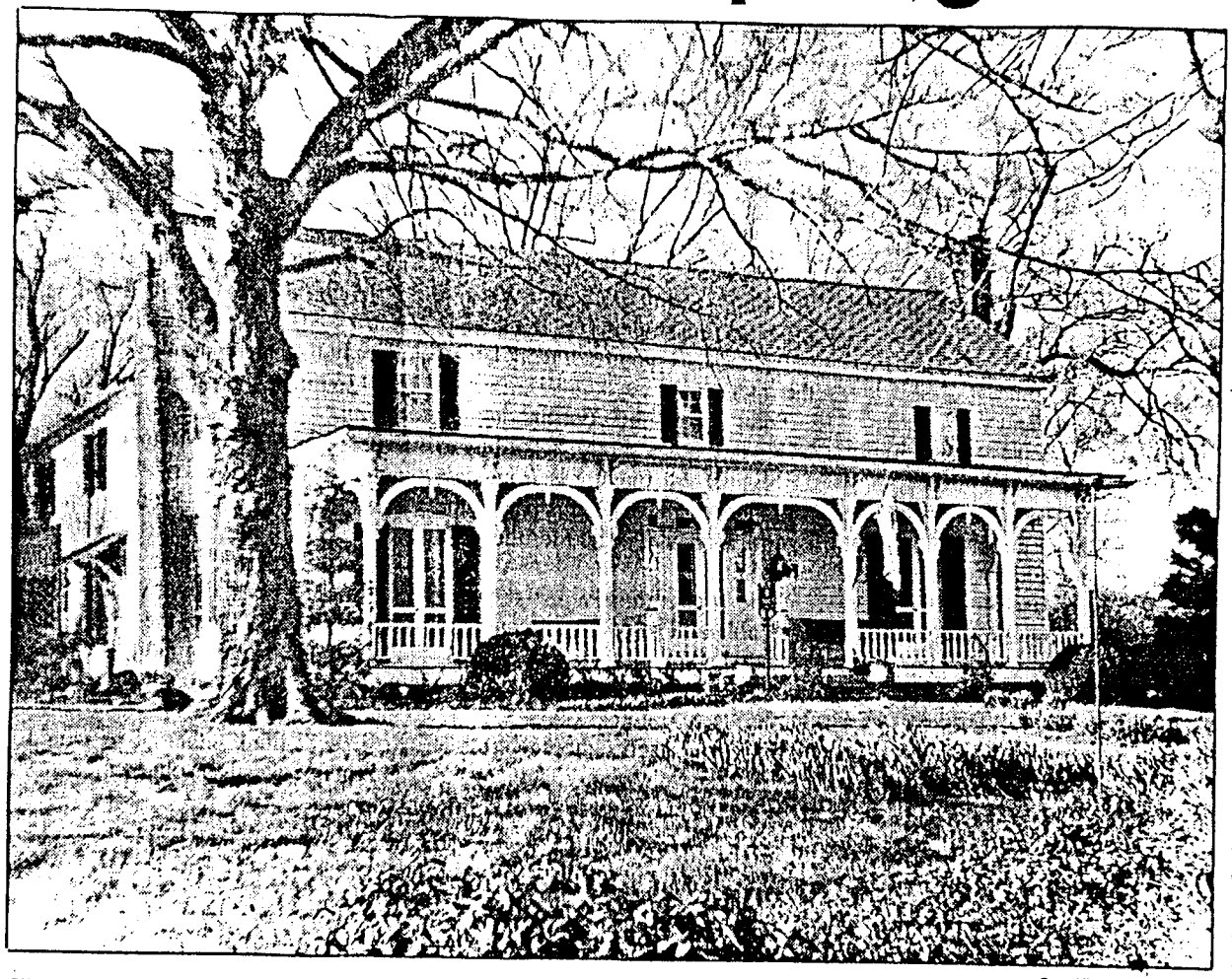
Those principles formed the framework for a public and private partnership that enabled the city of Brentwood to obtain the house and its outbuildings at no charge. The historic structures will be moved from Mallory Lane and its encroaching commercial development to become the cornerstone of Crockett Park's historic preservation area.

When longtime owners John and Karen Noel sold the homestead to Southeast Venture Co. in 1988, a deed restriction gave them final approval over what was done to the 1800s house. The unusual deed restriction was added as a matter of principle, Noel said.

"I do believe that somebody had to take a stand and commitment to the preservation of historic homes against the bulldozer," he said. "That's what we decided to do. To just take a stand on the principle of historical preservation.

"It was our commitment to ultimately what we believed that Williamson County could be and would become; it was just a vision," Noel said.

"I have watched, for numerous years, properties in the Williamson County area go the route of deterioration and neglect due to development because the land quite often became more valuable to development pur-



Greg Kinney • Submitted

The Cool Springs farmhouse and its outbuildings, which date to the 1800s, will become the cornerstone of a historic preservation and education center in Brentwood's new Crockett Park. The homestead, located on Mallory Lane, has been donated to the city's historic commission after more than nine months of negotiations and discussions.

what we really sell in Williamson County is its history.

"History is one of things that made Williamson County stand out from rest of the country towns, but we have allowed a lot of it to go to the

Initial plans for the property's development called for the home to be surrounded by specialty shops designed in a complimentary architectural style. However, those plans were never completed.

became developed into the CoolSprings Galleria and its outparcels of commercial development, the Cool Springs Farm property was listed for sale; ironically, the original name for the shopping mall was Park

Noel's suggestion that the project take its name from the historical homestead was accepted.

Meanwhile, during the past year; a citizen's advisory committee began discussing plans for the development of a 150-acre park on Crockett Road. The property, owned by Monsanto Chemical, had been the homestead of the Crockett family, early Brentwood settlers who were noted riflesmiths. Until a few years ago, the two-story brick Crockett home still stood, and its demolition by Monsanto caught city officials and residents by surprise.

Still smarting from the loss, the park advisory committee began suggesting that the city build a replica of the Crockett home or a similar period home, or move an old home to the site to provide a sense of the city's past.

The search for a suitable structure began a year ago, spearheaded by Linda Lynch, community relations director for the city of Brentwood, City Commissioner Anne Dunn, Brentwood Historian Vance Little and Historic Commission member Diane Sylvis.

"When the city decided a historic home or a replica would be just perfect to set the tone for Crockett Park, we looked into the possibility of building a house, and it was going to be quite expensive so we felt like what we really would love to have is a historic home that had some meaning behind it, some feeling," said Lynch.

"There just aren't that many historic homes still remaining in Brentwood, and we found none that people were willing to part with.

"We went all over the county look-